

# The Role of Teachers' Resource Centres in Teachers' Professional Development and Enhancing Primary Education in Zanzibar

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## Abstract

This paper reports the contribution of Teachers' Resource Centres (TRCs) in enhancing teachers' professional development. Variables investigated were designed programme for the primary school teachers, teachers who were attending in-service training at the TRCs, as well as those who had completed the training and teaching, and head teachers at the selected primary schools. The study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Interview schedules, questionnaires, observations, focus group discussion, and documentary reviews were used to collect data. The findings indicated that TRCs played a useful role in teachers' professional development but encountered with shortage of resources to run teachers' professional development programme effectively and efficiently. In addition to that, TRCs used one model of training (traditional) that did not consider teachers' educational background which to some extent affected the quality of training and hence teachers' performance. The workshops and seminars provided to few teachers limited their possibility to improve professionally as expected. Moreover, teachers trained at the TRCs were not competent in the subject matter as expected. Furthermore, shortage of teaching facilities, poor classroom, and school environment affected the teaching efficiency of the TRC-trained teachers. There is a need for the TRCs to evaluate and review teachers' programme for effective teacher training.

**Keywords:** instruction, innovative, recruitment, under qualified, nonconventional, clustering.

## 1. Introduction

Teachers' Resource Centres (TRCs) were first established in Britain between the late 1950s and early 1960s as a way to help teachers develop as professionals and improve teaching and learning process (Knamiller, Jain, Khatete, Welford & Wiegand, 1999). In the late 1960s and early 1970s a major wave of educational reform in Asia and Latin America brought TRCs and school clustering to the forefront as innovative strategies towards improving teaching and learning. After this period of reform, school clusters and TRCs continued to operate in some countries (Giordano, 2008). It was at this point towards the end of the 1970s when TRCs concept began to be exported to developing countries (Mushi, 2003). Over time, TRCs have come to be regarded as a very effective way of supporting professional development of teachers and providing opportunity to access organized educational resources (Knamiller et al., 1999). For instance, Giordano (2008) maintains that TRCs are used for delivery of professional development activities such as in-service training and to support teachers instructionally. Following the World Declaration of Education for All (EFA) at the Jomtien Conference in 1990, educational ministries and donor organizations made a new commitment to improve the provision and quality education (Giordano, 2008). Since then, the TRCs strategy has grown to be a common feature of educational reforms and improvement programmes throughout the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa (Mac Neil, 2004 as cited in Giordano, 2008, p. 25).

In Tanzania, the first TRC was established at Kleruu Teachers' College in 1972 with financial support from Government of Denmark. In 1986 the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a directive to establish TRCs in every region and district (Qvist & Omar, 1996). By the year 1999, for example, a total of 283 TRCs had been established in Tanzania Mainland and 9 in Zanzibar (Binde, 1999).

Since primary school education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education (URT, 1995) Zanzibar Ministry of Education came up with a number of policy documents addressing the issue of access, equality, and quality of education. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (1996-2006) states that:

Thus achievement levels in basic education shall be raised with particular emphasis on creative and critical thinking. This shall be undertaken through the continuing improvement of curriculum, the provision of teaching and learning equipment and facilities, the production and distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials, and the training and retraining of teachers (p.7).

The fact that Zanzibar had only one Teacher Training College (Nkrumah), which could not meet the demand of producing enough trained teachers for the schools, then the idea of introducing TRCs was of advantage not only to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training but also to the society in particular.

## 2. Background of the Study

Government of Zanzibar, soon after the 1964 Revolution, declared 'Free Education for All' regardless of their

colour, race or ethnic group and sex at all levels of education. This led to rapid expansion in the number of schools to cater for the increase in enrolments, particularly in most of the rural areas; and an acute shortage of teachers which led to recruitment of untrained teaching staff (Qvist & Omar, 1996). For example, the enrolment jumped for almost 50% during the ten years after revolution. Table 1 shows the increased number of pupils, schools and teachers in primary schools over the last four decades. Data for the year 2008 are also included.

Table 1. Development of Primary Education in Zanzibar

Year	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	No. of Schools
1963	24,334	655	62
1973	57,363	1,619	81
1983	80,602	3,290	119
1993	114,949	4,511	136
2003	184,266	5,523	158
2008	207,708	9,773	203

The data in Table 1 show that in 1963 the number of pupils was 24,334. There were 62 schools and 655 teachers. After twenty years, in 1983, the number of pupils had increased to 80,602. There were 3,290 teachers teaching in 119 schools. Twenty years later the number of pupils reached 184,266, with 5,523 teachers and 158 schools. Data in 2008 indicate that the number of pupils increased to 207,708, with 9,773 teachers and 203 schools. This means that the number of pupils, teachers and schools increased as the years passed.

A study by Qvist and Omar (1996) shows that the expansion in the number of schools led to deterioration in the quality of primary education due to inadequate teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classes and poor resources. As mentioned earlier that the existence of Nkrumah Teacher Training College did not meet the increased demand for producing enough trained teachers for the schools which contributed to employment of untrained teachers who are ineffective in teaching and learning, and this lead to a decline in the standard of primary education. This meant that allowing teachers without adequate knowledge, and functional skills to teach children contributed to pupils' poor performance in primary schools.

Since quality education processes required well-trained teachers who are able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods and life skills approach (Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA, 2003). The Zanzibar Ministry of Education with support from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) introduced TRCs in Zanzibar in 1993, and fully operated in 1996. Their establishment focused on the Ministry's key strategy of the qualitative improvement of education through ongoing in-service training of teachers and support (ADEA, 2003). Their major role therefore, is based on teachers' professional development that is, to train the untrained teachers through distance education, and develop and support the trained teachers. Therefore, the introduction of TRCs in Zanzibar has played part in reducing the number of untrained teachers from 1,264 in 1978 to 774 in 1993 (NTRC Annual Report, 2007/2008).

Data from the National Teachers' Resource Centre in Zanzibar indicate that teachers, who qualified at the TRCs as Grade III A in 2003 and 2008, went back to their schools as trained, motivated and competent in subject content. They were expected to enhance the quality of teaching in the classroom whereby results would be seen in a number of factors including the final examinations that would determine the quality of performance. In this regard, Standard Seven pupils' results in four subjects from nine Zanzibar primary schools were taken before and after the introduction of the TRCs. The results before TRCs were taken from 1999 to 2003 (Ministry of Education Zanzibar, 1999-2003). However, the standard seven pupils' results from 2004 – 2008 (Ministry of Education Zanzibar, 2004-2008) did not indicate a remarkable improvement in pupils' performance in the selected schools after two intakes of teachers who had completed their training at the TRCs. Rowntree (1992) asserts that we should look for what is happening at the schools as a measure of TRCs' success. In this regard, this study investigated the role that Teachers' Resource Centres have played in teachers' professional development and enhancing primary education in Zanzibari Primary Schools. The study was guided by one question:

1. What professional development programmes have been designed and implemented by Zanzibar TRCs to improve primary school teachers academically and professionally?

### 3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study based on the current model of evaluation by Stufflebeam (2000) that involves four aspects: Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP). Context evaluation assesses needs, problems, and opportunities as based on defining goals and priorities and judging the significance of outcomes. Input evaluation assesses alternative approaches to meeting needs as means of planning programmes and allocating resources. Process evaluation assesses the implementation of plans to guide activities and later to explain outcomes. Product evaluation identifies intended and unintended outcomes both of which help the process on track to determine effectiveness. The model was crucial since it shows how specific evaluation can be conducted. Stufflebeam's (2000) model was found suitable because it shaded light on what has to be done at the TRCs which

relates to this study as shown in Figure1.

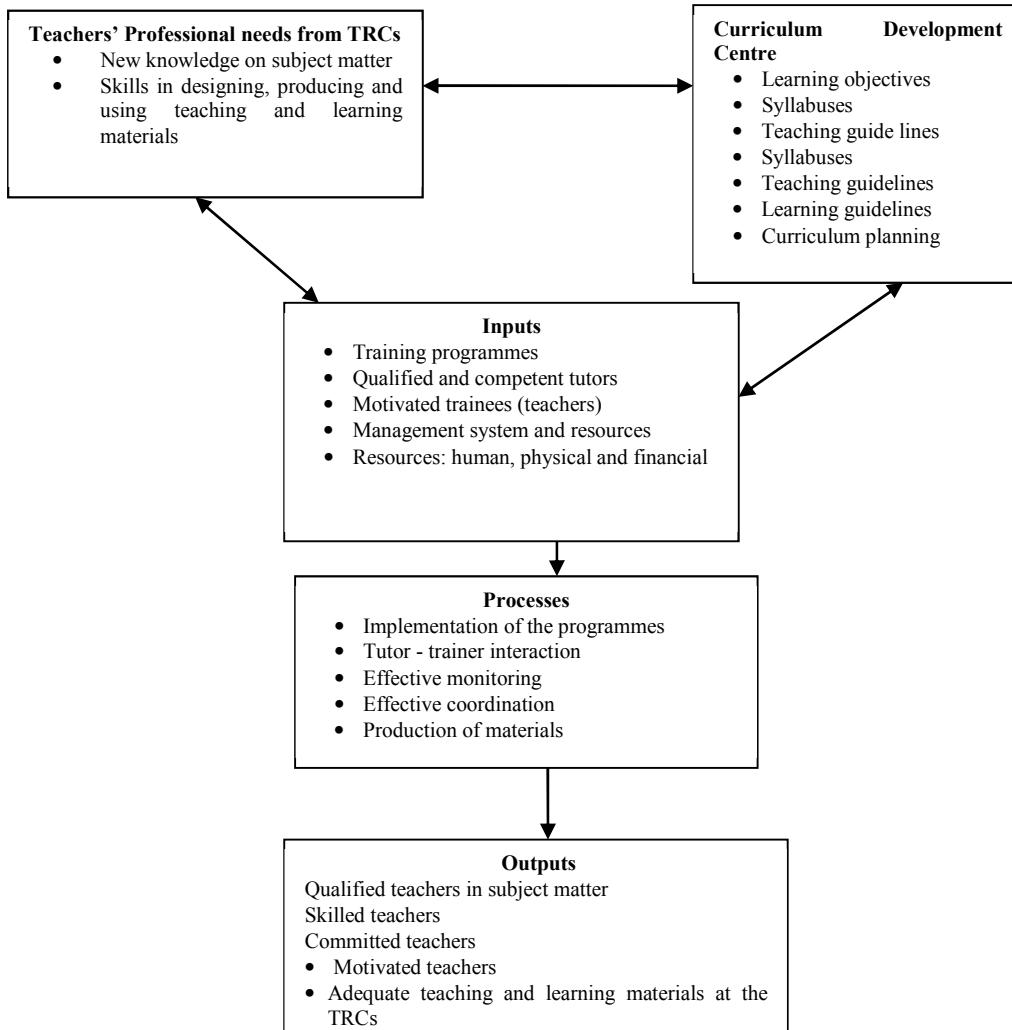


Figure 1: A Model explaining the Role of TRCs in Teachers' Professional Development, and enhancing the Quality of Primary Education.

The model in Figure 1 consists of five components, which are teachers' needs from the TRCs, the curriculum development centre, inputs, processes, and output. The first component explains teachers' professional learning needs from the TRCs. This needs include new knowledge on the subject matter, and skills for designing and producing teaching and learning materials. The literature indicates that effective teacher professional development begins with an understanding of teachers' needs and their work, and the school and classroom environment (Gaible & Burns, 2005).

The second component is the curriculum development centre. TRCs need to state clearly the objectives to be achieved, the syllabuses, and teaching guidelines in order to meet teachers' professional needs.

The third component is inputs, which are the resources necessary to yield outputs. The study anticipates that if there are well planned programmes, qualified and competent tutors, motivated/self-directed trainees (teachers), good management and adequate resources (human, physical and financial), the TRCs would then be able to meet teachers' needs.

The fourth component is processes. The figure shows that in order for the processes to take place, the programmes should be implemented, teachers and tutors should interact, monitoring and coordination should be effective and materials produced. In this study sufficient funds should be in line with the processes so that the TRCs achieve their objectives. It has been noted by Kaufman & Zahn (1993) that processes are the heart of any educational enterprise, and it is where we spend most of the resources and time.

The fifth component is outputs. Outputs are the results expected from the processes. The study expects that if inputs are well processed, then TRCs will produce committed, motivated and qualified teachers with knowledge of the subject matter and skilled at designing, producing and using teaching and learning materials.

#### 4. Literature Review

##### 4.1 Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers' professional development is the process and activities designed to promote professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers for the purpose of improving pupils' learning (Guskey, 2000; Anney, 2013, 2014). The purpose of professional development in education is to build and transform strong knowledge through teachers with the ambition to achieve excellence in education Compo (1997) meaning that teachers' professional development should be effective and successful in order to improve pupils' learning which will lead to quality education in any country. Moreover, Gaible & Burns (2005) assert that in order to be effective, teachers' professional development should address the core areas of teaching-content, curriculum, assessment and instruction. They add that, teachers' professional development should have the following characteristics:

- (i) Address teacher and pupil needs via approaches that are appropriate for conditions in schools;
- (ii) Be long-term, ongoing, sequential, and cumulative, providing teachers' opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills, and increase their abilities over time;
- (iii) Focus on pupils' learning outcomes in ways that enable teachers to use their new knowledge and skills;
- (iv) Model learner-centred instruction so that teachers' experiences reflect on the learning activities that they will lead;
- (v) Use formative and summative evaluation for programme improvement (pp.16-17).

Furthermore, literature indicates clearly that there should be a number of criteria to guide and promote teachers' professional development programmes (Little 1992, as cited in Villegas-Reimers & Reimers 2000). However, Villegas-Reimers & Reimers (2000) contend that, teachers' professional development requires four types of growth: growth in knowledge, growth in skills, growth in judgment (classroom related), and growth in the contribution teachers make to a professional community. In this regard, Guskey (2000) argues that "viewing professional development as a special event of three or four days of the school year severely restricts the educators' responsibilities to learn". That meant that teachers need an opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of their current practice, and continually explore new alternatives and opportunities for improvement. For instance, the Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2005) asserts that in order to be effective, teachers need a deep understanding of their subject area, knowledge of how pupils learn specific subject matter, and a range of strategies and practices that support learning. Since quality education processes require well-trained teachers who are able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods, and life skills approaches (Pigozzi, 2003), then TRCs have been given several roles to play to ensure rapid delivery of in-service training in order to enhance teachers' understanding of the content they teach.

It is through teachers' professional development provided at the TRCs that will enhance the quality of teaching that pupils receive in the classrooms. That is why Pollard & Tann (1993) maintain that high-quality education is not possible without the committed professionalism of teachers. They add that, the nature of teaching, professional development, and learning should never stop. This means that teachers need ongoing, sustained opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in order to teach effectively.

Along with that, a number of studies have reported that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the levels of pupils' achievement (National Commission on Teaching and American Future, 1996 as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Kimaro, 2005 & Koda, 2006) this means that improving the quality of teaching at primary schools is a major concern, and the demand of today's primary education call for teachers who are well skilled and grounded in knowledge, values and teaching strategies. That is why Quist (2000) stresses teachers at all levels to have access to training, on-going professional development, and support because they are essential players in promoting quality education. So the establishment of the TRCs should aim at training untrained teachers as well as upgrading trained teachers for effective teaching and improved performance of learners.

Looking at the foregoing evidences, it can be argued that professional development for teachers plays an essential role in improving the quality of education for all pupils, but Villegas-Reimers (2003) alleged that high-quality professional development should:

- Focus on teachers as central to pupils learning yet includes all other members of the school community;
- Enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- Promote continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools;
- Be planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the development;
- Require substantial time and other resources;
- Be driven by a coherent long-term plan;
- Be evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and pupil learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional developments efforts (p.24).

If that is the case, then there is no doubt that we can produce quality teachers who are competent, qualified and motivated to teach in our schools with the aim of improving the quality of primary education. This can only be done if our educators and facilitators will primarily focus on teacher professional development, and find new innovative ways to train our teachers. In this view, teachers must continuously develop and modernize their skills, techniques, and knowledge which will maintain and improve their competency. For instance, Mbunda (1998) states that:

Pre-service training alone is not enough whether one acquires a teacher certificate or a first degree for the basic reasons that;

- A single teacher training course is not sufficient to keep one intellectually alive;
- The curriculum always changes and knowledge and teaching technology develop; and
- Education is a life-long and continuous process (p. 68).

Nevertheless, Gaible & Burn (2005) explain that this should go together with the use of technology because experience around the world has shown that teacher training in the application of technology is the key determining factor for improved pupil learning.

So, Tanzania is in need of well-trained primary school teachers who are also effective. In order to accomplish this plan, TRCs as a strategy was adopted to upgrade trained and untrained primary school teachers. In Zanzibar, TRCs are now accepted as an integral part of the National Policy. TRCs as strategy for teachers 'professional development has the following potentials:

- To establish an upgrading system for untrained and under qualified teachers;
- To improve pedagogical skills of teachers through systematic in-service training;
- To improve school management by training heads of schools;
- To improve teaching and learning by establishing TRCs libraries and encourage teachers improvise teaching materials;
- To supervise and assess the impact and effectiveness of training using inspectors' reports, and classroom observation (Qvist & Omar, 1996, pp. 68-69).

TRCs in Zanzibar are nationally managed under the Department of Professional Services, Division of Teacher Education. Under this division there is a National Teacher Resource Centre Coordinator (NTRCC) who coordinates and organizes training for all TRCs based in the districts. The main objectives are:

- (i) To provide support and co-ordinate the cluster teacher centres;
- (ii) To provide support in educational innovations and the use of low cost teaching and learning resources;
- (iii) To provide in-service training to education supporting staff, like subject advisors, material writers and other education related personnel;
- (iv) To revise curriculum and suggest any technical changes;
- (v) To co-ordinate teacher support programmes with the aim of improving the status of teachers academically and professionally (National Teacher Recourse Centre, 1999, p. 2).

The mentioned strategies and objectives indicate that Zanzibar TRCs had well-planned and achievable objectives to develop primary school teachers academically and pedagogically that would play part in pupils' achievement at the primary schools.

#### 4.2 The Objectives of the TRCs

The literature denotes that educational programmes are directly related to their purpose and objectives, and must take into account the cultural setting, the resources and the different realities of schools and pupils (Fullan 1991, as cited in Villegas-Reimers & Reimers, 2000; Ngugi & Barasa, 1990). According to Chonjo (1998), the programmes must offer topics that are relevant and of compelling interest to teachers. This might be one of the factors why Kimaro (2005) found the programmes conducted by Kibaha TRC in Tanzania mainland helpful, relevant, and appropriate to teachers. This means that if teachers find what they are learning is important, it will be easy for them to gain knowledge and skills that will help them to put into practice what they have learnt. For instance, Guskey (2000) said that the programmes and activities should clearly indicate what is intended to be accomplished and how performance is to be measured. In the same vein, Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (2000); Oliver and Reschly (2007) stress that the programmes should provide coursework, be long term and should include guided practice with feedback and follow-up in order to implement successfully the improvements suggested in the teacher preparation programme.

#### 4.3 Functions of TRCs

TRCs are centres for in-service training academically and professionally (National Teacher Recourse Centre, 1999), and are responsible for training teachers in active teaching methodologies in order to replace the

traditional ‘chalk and talk’ (Giordano, 2008). In order to achieve this, Tyler (2003) asserts that good training enables participants to gain new knowledge and skills as well as the attitudes. In addition to that, TRCs are also responsible for the need to bring educational services closer to the schools as well as providing on-going professional support to teachers. Furthermore, TRCs are responsible in encouraging teachers to play an active role in educational innovation which can take the form of curriculum material development, adapting natural curricular, teaching methodology and resource production. Moreover, TRCs function as an information agency where teachers and members of the school community as well as informal meeting place where educationists meet and exchange ideas informally. Such meetings greatly enhance the professional development of teachers (Chonjo, 1998).

#### 4.4 Effectiveness of Training Course Programmes and Quality of Trainers

Gable and Burns (2005) maintain that in order to be effective and successful, teacher professional development programmes must be of high quality and relevant to teachers’ needs. Their experience is also a crucial factor in the quality of work. For instance, Rajab (1998) conceives a good trainer as the one in need of a variety of approaches and patterns of working together with flexibility, to call on several different strategies within space of one lesson. In addition to that, good trainers need to use language which does not limit trainees’ responses as well as teaching and learning materials. That meant that quality trainers are very essential if learning is to be effective.

#### 4.5 Quality assurance mechanisms of TRCs’ activities

For the success of any programme, quality assurance mechanisms are important to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, so that decisions can be made to continue with programme or not. There must be indicators to show attainment of the intended goals (Shoo, 2004). Binde (1999) pointed out that some indicators, which should be set and used in the process of assessing the performance of the programmes, are as follows:

- Goals attained and timeliness - How TRC programmes enable teachers to attain their goals within the specified time;
- Needs met - To what extent does TRC programmes meet clients’ needs in relation to their expectations.

Besides, various scholars have conducted studies on TRCs worldwide and pointed some positive results. For example, a study by Giordano (2008) on School Clusters and TRCs found that some TRCs and School Clusters have the potential to contribute to improvements in education but the programmes have not convincingly demonstrated the capacity for effectively improving the quality of education. In Tanzania, Mushi (2003) did a research on TRCs: Theory and Practice and established that the policy of the establishment of TRCs to promote teachers’ innovations in teaching methodology as well as preparation of teaching materials were not implemented as a coherent national strategy. Furthermore, Shoo (2004) on the Role of TRCs in Improving the Quality of Education in Tanzania Mainland and Maganga (2006) on The Role of Teachers’ Resource Centres in Promoting Teachers’ Professional Development Growth found that TRCs programmes were not operating effectively hence failed to contribute towards the improvement of the country’s quality of education because most of the tutors were under qualified and incompetent. There was also inadequacy of material resources for running the TRCs that tutors who were responsible in upgrading teachers at the TRCs were not competent. More importantly, they were borrowed or hired from secondary schools, and they were not sufficient (Kisuda, 2005; Kimaro, 2005; Koda, 2006; Mirambo, 2007). Literature review indicates that there is a gap on the role of TRCs in teachers’ professional development in enhancing primary education in Zanzibar that needs to be filled.

### 5. Methodology

The objective of the study was to find out the role that TRCs have contributed in teachers’ professional development and enhancing primary education in Zanzibar. The study took place in nine TRCs; five in Unguja and four in Pemba. In this study both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized to enhance the credibility of the findings. Creswell (2005) argues “combining qualitative and quantitative data best understand and explain a research problem” (p. 52). Data were collected through interview, observation, questionnaires, focus group discussion, and documentary review. The study employed purposive, stratified, and random sampling techniques.

### 6. Data Analysis

Holliday (2000) idea of thematic analysis was adopted in the study. The themes were identified before, but they were refined after during the analysis of data. For example, questionnaires from tutors and teachers were guided by selection of sub-themes, which emerged together with major research questions set forth for the study. Data from documentary review and interviews were subjected to content analysis in order to obtain latent meanings of opinions described in the document. Data from closed questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

## 7. Results

7.1 Designed professional development programme for teachers in Zanzibar TRCs

Findings from the study showed that Zanzibar TRCs had teachers professional development programme designed for primary school teachers. The programme provided in-service training for untrained and under qualified teachers. Also there were workshops and seminars for teachers. The distance education officer said:

“In-service training programme is for primary school teachers who are trained and not trained. It aims at improving teachers academically and professionally. Workshops and seminars are for both primary and secondary school teachers”.

The in-service training programme was targeted to Form Three untrained teachers, Form Three with grade IIIB, Form Four pass but untrained teachers, and Form Four fail and untrained teachers. Workshops and seminars were targeted to untrained teachers with consideration of the subjects they were teaching.

### 7.1.1 In-Service Training Programme

Findings from the interview indicated that there were 1,264 teachers who were not trained. So the in-service training programme was designed to upgrade teachers academically and professionally while teaching at the schools. The programme was implemented in 1996, where 409 primary school teachers were registered in the first intake (1996-1999) in Unguja and Pemba. The training was expected to end in 1999 but due to financial constraints it was stopped for two years. The first intake completed its course in 2003, whereby 355 teachers graduated as Grade IIIA teachers, and 68 teachers did not complete the training for various reasons such as death and sickness. Others were disappointed and dropped out of the course. In addition, the training took eight years instead of four as expected because of financial constraints. That meant that the objective of TRCs to train teachers for four years failed, and the objective was not achieved as planned.

Moreover, results from documentary review showed that the second intake (2005-2008) had 469 teachers. Explaining this, the distance education officer said:

“433 teachers completed the course as planned but 17 of them did not due to some of the reasons mentioned earlier. The course took four years as planned”.

This means that the objective of the TRCs in the second intake was achieved on one hand; on the other hand; the number of teachers who failed in the second intake was less compared to the first intake. This is an indicator that there had been some improvements in the implementation of the programme in the second intake.

Furthermore, the study found the last intake (2010-2013) of teachers attending in-service training at the TRCs. Findings showed that there were 699 teachers, a higher number compared to the past two intakes. This means that TRCs would have problems in accommodating all the teachers in terms of resources. Since the training was done through distance learning the study investigated the availability of the modules for effective learning.

### 7.1.2 Availability of the Modules

Findings showed that the modules were produced at the NTRC and sold to teachers at 2,500 Tanzanian Shillings each. However, results showed that the modules were not enough to all teachers at all TRCs. In addition to that the findings indicated that the modules were written in English because it was the medium of instruction except those in Kiswahili as a subject. Furthermore, tutors were given an opportunity to comment on the availability of the modules according to the subjects they were facilitating. This is what some of them said:

Tutor 1: “They should be available on time”.

Tutor 2: “They need to be adequate”.

Tutor 3: “They are very expensive for the teachers to buy”.

Tutor 4: “They should be given free of charge as motivation to teachers”.

From tutors' comments, one can find that the modules were not distributed on time, and were not enough. Along with that they were expensive for the teachers to buy and that is why they suggested the modules to be given free of charge so that every teacher would have an access on them for effective learning. Since data showed that the first intake was stopped for two years because of lack of the modules it is sign that NTRC was not able to produce enough modules for effective teacher training while teachers depended very much on them as their textbooks. Additionally, the study investigated the extent to which the modules were relevant to the teachers in the training.

### 7.1.3 Appropriateness and relevance of the Modules

Findings from the study showed that 24 tutors out of 27 (89%) revealed that the modules had relevant content but the language (English) used was difficult for the teachers to understand the content. Three tutors out of 27 (11%) pointed out that the modules were not relevant because the content was not at the teachers' level particularly those of Education and Science, and they had insufficient methodology content. The tutors said:

Tutor 1: The modules are difficult not only to the teachers but also to us.

Tutor 2: The language used is not simplified to the level of learners.

Tutor 3: The content is presented in a difficult language for the teachers to understand.

Tutor 4: Our teachers' level of understanding is low that is why they find it difficult.

Tutor 5: The content is relevant to undergraduates and not these teachers.

Teachers in the training were also asked in the questionnaires how they find their modules. Fifteen teachers out of twenty six (57.7%) find the modules difficult. Eleven teachers (42.3%) acknowledged understanding the modules. From the findings one can find that more than half of the teachers find the modules difficult for them to understand despite the details such as an introduction, objectives, study time, content, activities, summary and unit exercises that were in the modules to help teachers to study on their own time. Teachers were also asked if they were able to read and understand the modules without tutors' help. Findings from teachers' questionnaires indicated that eighteen teachers out of twenty six (69.2%) did not understand the modules without tutors' help while eight teachers (30.8%) did understand them. The study went further by investigating the source of the problem. Findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' ability to understand the Modules

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Difficult Words</b>	5	19.2	27.8	27.8
<b>Difficult Language</b>	10	38.5	55.6	83.3
<b>Low Capacity</b>	2	7.7	11.1	94.4
<b>Difficult Content</b>	1	3.8	5.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Data from Table 2 indicate that ten teachers out of twenty six (55.6%) had problems in understanding the modules, and the reason being difficult language used in them. Five teachers (27.8%) find the words in English difficult for them to understand. Two teachers (11.1%) admitted to have low capacity of understanding the language used in the modules. This means that the English Language used in the modules caused an obstacle in understanding much of the content presented as well as communicating with tutors in English at the centres.

Furthermore, the researcher got an opportunity to examine teachers' modules with the help from the distance education officer and the tutors in the focus group discussion. Findings showed that education and science modules were difficult compared to the modules in other subjects. Along with that, the interview with the distance education officer revealed the following: "The modules have not been revised since they were introduced in the training in 1996". This means that teachers would continue facing problems in understanding the content presented in the modules in each intake, and that would hinder the quality of the training, and hence, teachers' performance at the centres.

It was further learned from the distance education officer that some of the topics in education modules were appropriate to undergraduate students rather than to the teachers at the centres. This might be the reason for teachers' complaints in the questionnaires that the modules were difficult for them to understand. With such a situation, the modules that were developed with the aim of helping teachers to improve academically and professionally would not be realized.

#### 7.1.4 Language used in the training

The findings from the interview with the distance education officer showed that English was the medium of instruction for all subjects except Kiswahili. For instance, the results from the questionnaires showed that 17 tutors out of 26 (58.6%) acknowledged teachers to have problems in using English as the medium of instruction. On top of that, tutors pointed out that they always translate the content of the modules into Kiswahili so that the teachers understand them, contrary to the mode of training where they were required to help teachers in difficult areas. This means that the medium of instruction was not appropriate to the teachers.

The study went far by looking at the causes of language barrier that affected communication between tutors and teachers that also affected the quality of training. Results from tutors' questionnaires showed that teachers were faced with the following factors: they were under- qualified to cope with the training, they found the topics new to them, and they felt shy in the course.

Firstly, data revealed that teachers had low knowledge in understanding the content presented in the modules. Secondly, the topics were new to them. This might be the reason for them to feel shy because they were not able to participate in the discussions. Such behaviour would prevent them from interacting with tutors for effective learning, hence, high performance. Also this might be one of the reasons for them to want their tutors to translate the content into Kiswahili Language contrary to the language of instruction in order for them to understand the content.

#### 7.1.5 Face to Face Sessions at the TRCs

The study investigated the way face to face sessions were conducted at the Zanzibar TRCs. Data for this section were collected through interview and questionnaires. For instance, information from the distance education officer revealed the following:

"Face to face sessions are done by tutors twice a week; (Thursday and Saturday). Each subject has two supporting tutors who offer regular assistance and supervision to the teachers at all TRCs. At the

moment there are fifteen tutors in each TRC with a total number of 135 tutors”.

The distance education officer added the following:

“The training needs teachers to read their modules and identify difficult areas before they meet with their tutors in the face to face sessions”.

However, findings from teachers’ questionnaires showed that some of them were not able to read the modules because of limited time they had at home to go through them. Despite the earlier mentioned problems the study also looked at the way teachers benefited from face to face sessions. The following were responses from some of the participants:

Teacher 1: I always ask my tutor questions which I don’t understand from the modules.

Teacher 2: I share ideas with him/her in difficult topics for more clarification.

Teacher 3: I became creative in making teaching and learning materials through my tutor.

Teacher 4: I gained more confidence in teaching from my tutor.

Teacher 5: I learn things that I did not know.

Teacher 6: I was helped to be creative in preparing teaching and learning materials.

Teacher 7: I was helped to be confident in teaching.

Teachers’ positive responses meant that face to face sessions were necessary and important to them since they gained knowledge that was appropriate to their profession. This means that TRCs were playing its role in helping teachers to develop academically and professionally.

#### 7.1.6 Mode of evaluating teachers’ In-Service Training at the TRCs

Results from the study showed that there were four different ways of evaluating teachers’ in-service training. Firstly, there were self-help exercises after each section throughout the course unit to check learner’s progress. However, responses from tutors indicated that teachers did their exercises but the problem was that they reproduced what was in their modules and the reason being:

Tutor 1: Majority of them do not understand the content.

Tutor 2: They find English difficult so they cannot produce something new.

Tutor 3: They don’t read books to gain new knowledge.

Tutor 4: They do not have group discussions.

From the tutors’ view one can find that teachers had problems in writing something new on their own because of the mentioned factors that to some extent might hinder academic performance at the centres.

Secondly, there was an exercise at the end of each unit that carried 40%. Results from the tutors showed that teachers did copy the answers from the modules as they are and submit to them for marking. Tutors had no alternative but to mark them as they are. This means that there would be no difference between self-help and the unit exercises since no new knowledge was added to enable them to improve academically.

Thirdly, there were three examinations for teachers to check how much they had improved academically. Findings showed that the overall pass mark for each subject was 40%, and good grades were found in Kiswahili, Islamic Studies, Social Sciences and Science subjects with comparison to Education, English and Mathematics. Table 3 presents some of the teachers’ results in grades in three subjects (Education, English and Mathematics) from July 2007 to December 2008.

Table 3. Teachers’ results in Grades in three subjects from July 2007 to December 2008

SUBJECTS	GRADES				FAILED	TOTAL
	A	B	C	D		
Education	1	27	217	180	4	429
English	2	25	194	204	3	429
Mathematics	0	10	88	312	19	429
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1287</b>

Table 3 shows that only one teacher out of 429 teachers was able to obtain an A grade in Education. Two teachers managed to obtain A in English while Mathematics had none. Additionally, 27 teachers attained B in Education, 25 in English, and 10 in Mathematics. Results indicated that 499 teachers had C and 696 teachers had D in the three subjects which were not good grades. Besides, a few of them failed in the three subjects (26) mostly in Mathematics.

Furthermore, findings from the NTRC showed that teachers who failed to score 40% and above were given a chance to sit for supplementary examinations. For example, the following were three extracts taken from three teachers’ English supplementary examination results in Methodology Section done in 2009 at one of the TRCs. The section had two questions, and teachers were required to choose one question. The questions were:

1. Suppose you want to teach standard three and four pupils on *how much* using a dialogue technique (a) Explain the method you would use (b) Suggest teaching and learning materials to be used.
2. (a) How can you check your pupils whether they have understood the greetings? (b) Suggest an activity

you will apply to check their understanding. The following are three extracts taken from three teachers' examinations at one of the TRCs:

**Teacher One:**

*The method which would use in this techniguis group work.  
Teacher stand divide the class in groups of 4 or 6 it depend the class size.  
First the teacher the topic medert stand well the topic.  
After students divide into groups given their words  
i will give the dialogue on the black board and want then to read loudly.  
Each group will read and following onother group.*

**Teacher Two:**

*Last week I taught my students greetings lesson.  
How I want to check them whether they understand or not.  
Firstly I will divide the class into groups and want to greet each other from the groups.  
Secondly, I want to greet each of them from the group (one by one).  
Thirdly, teacher I want one by one to greet with me.  
Lastly, all of us (teacher and students) are going to song that sing.  
That song in the last week and every one should sing loudly.  
In order to hear well how they sing and song.*

**Teacher Three:**

*I will prepare an accation which will be attende by the gucse of horwur.  
Before the coming of the guest student themselves inter in the class in different time do they have to great each other.*

The first teacher answered question number one on how to teach *how much* but failed to explain the method that he/she should use as well as teaching and learning materials. In addition to that, the teacher did not use the dialogue as instructed. Moreover, the work had many grammatical mistakes and the sentences were not meaningful at all. This indicates that the teacher was not able to answer the question the reason being language problem. From the findings, one can doubt about teachers' performance at the TRCs because first, they failed the subject, second, they were given an opportunity to sit for the supplementary examination with the expectation that they would pass but their results were not good (Refer to the three extracts). This means that if they failed to explain how to teach some of the topics while they were trained in the subject matter, then how could they be able to teach English in their classrooms? What would be the results of other teachers who were not studying English as a subject but their examinations were set in English Language? They might have more problems in explanation compared to those whose combination included the English Language.

The second teacher answered question number two on how to check pupils understanding and suggests an activity to check their understanding. Compared to the first teacher, he/she understood the question but the problem was language too. For instance, it is written: *Lastly, all of us (teacher and pupils) are going to song that sing.....* Here the teacher did not know the difference between *song which is a noun* and *sing which is a verb*. Furthermore, the teacher wrote: ....to hear how they sing and song...which was also wrong. Normally we do not hear sing and song but we listen to the song(s).

The third teacher answered question number two but this was worse compared to the first two teachers. The question was not answered at all. The work was full of grammatical mistakes. For example, it was written: *I will prepare an accation attended by the gucse of horwur...*the idea being to prepare an occasion....attended by the guest of honor. This showed that the teacher had problems in understanding and using English Language too. He/she was not able to make even a single correct and meaningful English sentence in the whole section but he/she passed the subject. The question here is if these are the kind of teachers we hope are trained and qualified from the TRCs with the expectations to teach in our primary schools and contribute to pupils' good performance then, how would they teach the English subject while they had English problems themselves?

Fourthly, there were classroom observations done by the tutors during teaching practices which carried 100 percent. It was necessary for all teachers to be observed to determine the extent to which they had improved in pedagogical skills. In the questionnaires all twenty seven tutors (100%) acknowledged visiting teachers at their schools for observation. It was also explained by the tutors that teachers showed some elements of improvement when teaching in the classrooms. The following were some of the positive things noted by the tutors from teachers' classroom observation:

- Tutor 1: They have improved in teaching methodology.
- Tutor 2: They can apply child-centred approach in the classrooms.

- Tutor 3: They have gained confidence in teaching.  
Tutor 4: They can plan their lessons sequentially and keep record.  
Tutor 5: They are role models to their schools.  
Tutor 6: They can set achievable objectives.  
Tutor 7: They can manage their classrooms.

Tutors' positive responses indicated that TRCs were playing its role in teachers' professional development through in-service training since they had improved pedagogically as well as managerial skills.

Fifthly, it was informed by the distance education officer that there was continuous evaluation that was carried in two ways: firstly by subject advisors. The interview with the nine coordinators showed that subject advisors did follow-up activities in schools with the aim of assessing teachers' knowledge and skills gained from the TRCs and the way they were applied in the classrooms. Also all TRC coordinators did make follow-up to teachers at the schools. The following were some of positive comments from the coordinators to show that teachers had improved pedagogically:

- Coordinator 1: Some of the teachers want to teach section three  
that comprised of standard four, five, six and seven  
pupils rather than standards one, two and three.  
Coordinator 2: They have increased the ability to express themselves.  
Coordinator 3: They care their teaching at the schools.  
Coordinator 4: They do activity based at schools but faced with large class size problems.  
Coordinator 5: They have changed the methodology of teaching from  
teacher-centred to child-centred approach.  
Coordinator 6: They have improved academically and professionally.

This means that the in-service training programme at the TRCs had brought some changes to teachers not only academically but also professionally. Their comments were somehow similar to those of the tutors in the questionnaires.

## 7.2 Workshops conducted in TRCs

Findings from the interview with all nine TRC coordinators revealed that workshops focused on classroom teaching and learning including instructional material preparation. The workshops were organized by the subject advisors according to the needs of teachers and the pupils at the schools. They were conducted subject-wise. The coordinators explained that not all subject teachers got an opportunity to attend workshops because of shortage of resources that was facing all TRCs. That meant that, few teachers from the schools attended workshops which would not play great part in teachers' pedagogical improvement, hence, pupils' performance at the primary schools. However, the materials produced in the workshops were left at the centres for the teachers to borrow when they need them. Results showed that only ten teachers out of 23 (45.5%) were able to visit TRCs in order to borrow the materials, while 12 teachers out of 23 (54.5%) were not able to do so because of the distance.

The study also investigated the role of the head teachers in supporting teachers to get the materials at the centres for effective classroom teaching. The interview with nine head teachers indicated that only one head teacher from Pemba out of nine was able to provide bus fare for his teachers whenever they wanted to visit the centre for various purposes such as borrowing teaching and learning materials as well as reference books. Six head teachers admitted to allow teachers to go but they did not have money to support them. One head teacher from Unguja said, "I go to the TRC and borrow teaching and learning materials to my teachers whenever they need them". It was strange to find out that some head teachers were the ones who went to the centres to borrow teaching materials for their teachers instead of supporting them to go there as stated in one of the TRCs objective. Such habit would discourage teachers to visit the centres where they would have an opportunity to use library facilities that were meant for them in order to gain new knowledge. In addition, teachers would not have a chance to meet with each other, share ideas and skills in teaching that would develop them professionally, and play part in pupils' improvement at the schools.

## 7.3 Seminars conducted in TRCs

Data in this section were collected through interview from all nine TRC coordinators. Findings from the study showed that seminars were conducted at all TRCs with the aim of finding solutions to the topics that were difficult for the primary school teachers to teach. One of them said, "Topics are brought at the centres through subject panel leaders from the schools". It was also found out that subject panel leaders were the first point of contact for a teacher with subject related difficulty. Once the solutions were found, then subject teachers were informed to attend seminars at the centres.

Despite the fact that TRCs had effective programme for the primary school teachers, findings showed that it was difficult for all teachers to attend seminars because of limited resources that were available at the TRCs. For instance, one of the coordinators said:

“When there is a seminar for class three and four teachers teaching English subject it is difficult for me to take all of them from all schools in the cluster at a time. Therefore, I tell the head teachers to select two or three teachers from each school in the cluster to attend the seminar”.

Such situation did not allow all teachers to attend seminars that would enable them to improve in the subjects they were teaching and play part in pupils’ performances.

#### 7.4 Sustainability of the Programme

The results from all nine TRC coordinators showed that Zanzibar TRCs’ programme was sustained by the school communities in which they were set. The main contributors were all primary school teachers and pupils. This was possible because Zanzibar had a policy that needed all primary school teachers to contribute one thousand Tanzanian shillings each year to the nearby TRC. Pupils were required to contribute one hundred Tanzanian shillings per year. Their contributions were found to be crucial for the survival of the centres but they were not sufficient. Despite the fact that there were initiatives to sustain the Zanzibar TRCs, information from one of the coordinators indicated the following:

“Some of the head teachers do not contribute the total amount of money according to the number of the pupils the reason being parents’ poverty. To a high extent it affects the implementation of our programme”.

From the findings one can find that coordinators were faced with shortage of funds to run the workshops and seminars because since it was the only major source of income that TRCs depended on. Besides, some of the coordinators were of the opinion that if the Ministry would build awareness to stakeholders they would get assistance from them.

#### 7.5 The way in which TRCs help teachers develop academically and professionally

The data from the study indicated that the in-service training programme was divided into two parts. Part one was the professional training programme covering Grade IIIB. Teachers were expected to improve academically and pass in six subjects as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of Part One Subjects in Units at the TRCs.

Subjects	Environmental Studies	Mathematics	English	Kiswahili	Islamic	Education
Units	08	13	12	07	12	12

Table 4 shows that the subjects had a different number of units to cover in a period of two years. The findings also showed that all teachers were required to study all the subjects and pass in all of them before they joined part two. Part two was offered in three combinations leading to the equivalent of a Grade IIIA certificate. The subjects were distributed in the form of units as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of Part Two Subjects in Units at the TRCs

Subjects	Science	Social Science	Mathematics	English	Kiswahili	Islamic Knowledge	Education
Units	22	19	09	15	10	10	12

Table 5 shows the subjects studied in part two. The Science combination comprised Science, Mathematics, Islamic Studies and Education. Social Sciences consisted of Islamic Studies, English, Social Studies and Education. The duration of the course was two years. The distance education officer said:

“Its content covers many issues such as teaching and the profession; learning, classroom and school management; learning resources, child growth and development, and guidance and counseling”.

From the findings it can be learned that the educational modules were useful to the teachers because they helped them to improve their professionalism as well as enabling them to understand their pupils using psychology.

#### 7.6 Application of knowledge and skills learned at the TRCs

The findings showed that teachers who had attended the in-service training courses were more up-to-date than those who had not. For example, 22 teachers out of 23 (95.7%) observed had detailed well planned lessons. They were also committed and active in their work. This was different from the teachers trained at the colleges, because six teachers out of 18 (33.4%) did not have lesson plans and the reason was, “We are experienced teachers”, which is a mistake in the teaching profession.

Furthermore, the study examined the methods used by teachers in the classroom. The findings from the

questionnaires showed that 23 teachers out of 26 use different methods for teaching such as pair work, games, songs, brainstorming, group work, participatory work and discussions. Group work was the most used by teachers at 39.1% followed by questions and answers at 30.0%. The participatory method was used by 21.7%. However, teachers who were trained at the colleges were found not to use a variety of teaching methods, despite their experience, unlike their fellow teachers, who had attended in-service training courses.

#### 7.6.1 Teachers who were teaching English

Findings from the classroom observation showed that some of the English teachers were not able to achieve their objectives (See Mosha, 2014). Few examples were taken to explain the situation. For example, in school D the objective was the students to read in groups but the pupils did not read as the objective stated and the reason being “the teacher who used the books yesterday has not yet come to school today”. The English teacher said. Meaning that, teachers shared books when teaching. In school C the specific objective of the lesson was that the pupils to read a passage and fill in the gaps in the given words. Instead of the teacher to follow what he had planned, he started reading the passage loudly to the pupils while they had textbooks. In the practice stage pupils were required to construct five sentences using the words: driver, beach, job, ancient, and 200 from the story they had read. Most of them failed to make correct and meaningful short sentences. The following illustrates some of the sentences made by one of the Standard Seven Pupils expected to sit for the Final National Examination.

1. My father is a diver.
2. Fumba is very beach.
3. My mother's job is the hotel.
4. Lions is animals ancient.
5. My sister in low is 200.

The examples above illustrate clearly that the pupil had a problem in mastering the language, and that is why he/she was not able to use the words correctly as instructed.

#### 7.6.2 Teachers who were teaching Kiswahili

The findings from Kiswahili observed lessons showed that most of the teachers presented their lessons well. However, a few of them failed to achieve their objectives as planned the reason being, “Shortage of textbooks”. For instance, at school D only the teacher had a copy of the Kiswahili textbook. Pupils did not have books to read in the class. The teacher read the passage to the pupils loudly. At the end she asked questions from the passage. Some of the pupils were not able to answer the questions because they did not remember what the teacher had read. She was teaching Standard Three Pupils. The class has sixty pupils. This means that the trained teacher was faced with two problems; shortage of resources, and large class size which might affect the teaching and learning process despite the fact that she was trained at the TRCs.

#### 7.6.3 Teachers who were teaching Mathematics

Nine mathematics teachers trained at the TRCs and one at the College were observed. One example was used to explain the situation. The teacher was trained at the TRCs. She was teaching Mathematics to Standard Five pupils at school E. The topic was subtraction. The lesson was well planned and presented. The teacher was competent in the subject. At the practice stage the teacher asked the pupils to sit in five groups. Each group had six to seven members. They were told to do one question from their textbooks. Enough time was allocated to them. Four groups out of five failed to subtract the following - 1991 from 6421. The following were their answers: Group1: 4439; Group 2: 4521; Group 3: 5409; Group 4: 4530; and Group 5: 4521, instead of 4430, and the pupils were counting stones as if they were Standard One and Two pupils. Figure 2 shows some of the pupils who were using stones to find the solution of the problem given in their group.

Figure 2. Standard Five Pupils doing Mathematics in the classroom.



Data from Figure 2 shows that pupils had low knowledge in understanding the subject which might be caused by the presence of incompetent teachers in the subject from the lower classes. A question here is if the majority of the pupils in class five were unable to subtract such a small figure, then how could they manage to attempt difficult ones at the upper levels? When the teacher was asked why pupils were counting stones at that level the answer was, “*Wanafunzi ni wazito na hawana msingi mzuri katika somo la Hesabu tangu darasa la kwanza*”. Meaning: Pupils were slow learners and they had no good foundation in Mathematics from Standard One. So if pupils in Standard Five were so poor in Mathematics then what do we expect them to do in classes six and seven?

Apart from classroom observation, the researcher examined pupils' work. The findings showed that pupils were not given adequate exercises that would challenge them. Only a few (five questions) were given to the pupils in every exercise. Also some of the pupils' work had mistakes but there were no corrections. For instance, the following was found in one of the pupils' exercise books in Standard Six at school F. The pupil was not able to compute the following  $(50+20) \div (5+5)$ . This is what he/she had done:

$$\begin{aligned}(50+20) &\div (5+5) \\ 70 &\div 5+5 \\ 14+5 &= 19\end{aligned}$$

The pupil was able to add 50 and 20 to get 70 but failed to add 5 and 5 to get 10, and the teacher had put a big ( $\times$ ) or wrong on the whole page of the pupil's exercise book, indicating that all the answers on that page were wrong that will not motivate the pupil to like the subject.

#### 7.6.4 Teachers who were teaching Science

Six teachers trained at the TRCs and three from Colleges were observed from Standards Four to Seven. All the teachers presented their lessons well compared with Mathematics, Kiswahili and English. Teaching and learning materials were used in most of the lessons except in schools A and B. The lessons were presented effectively and were attractive to the learners. For example, the teacher from school E used discarded materials when demonstrating the concept of density. The pupils observed the changes from the experiment and readings were recorded on the board. The objective of the lesson was achieved.

#### 7.6.5 Teachers who were teaching Social Science

The findings showed that all nine teachers observed were using the lecture method that bored the pupils. The lessons were not as attractive as the science lessons. The teachers had some knowledge of the topics they were teaching but incompetent. Also their lessons were uninteresting because they lacked teaching and learning materials to motivate learners as well as different techniques to make the lessons attractive to them.

### 8. Discussion and Conclusions

The results from the findings showed that Zanzibar TRCs had useful programme for primary school teachers that helped them to improve academically and professionally. The in-service training programme aimed at helping teachers improve in teaching and learning process that would contribute to pupils' good performance in all primary schools. However, results from the study showed that two intakes had completed in-service training at the TRCs but the first intake was not effective. The fact that the training was stopped for two years due to shortage of resources affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programme. Findings from this study contradicted those of Mirambo (2007), who found that the programmes in some of the TRCs in Iringa Region were not properly carried out due to the lack of qualified personnel. Since primary school teachers

had positive attitudes toward the courses provided at the TRCs, and the provision of quality education and training is the ultimate goal of any education system, then the implementation of the TRCs programmes in Zanzibar need to be planned accordingly for effective results since they are of great significance.

The fact that teachers had completed in-service training and qualified means that TRCs were playing its role of developing teachers with the aim of improving the teaching and learning process. However, findings showed the number of teachers who had been trained from the TRCs was few in comparison to the number of schools that need such kind of teachers. This means that few teachers at the schools would not show much impact in pupils' achievement. In this context, Zanzibar TRCs should try to use different models of training to promote and support teachers' professional development rather than depending on the traditional model which did not produce enough teachers who would bring change at all schools.

Results from the study also showed that National Teacher Resource Centre was not able to supply enough modules to teachers at all TRCs. Also the content in teachers' modules was not at their level, and the English Language used was difficult for them to understand the content presented in them. This shows that it would be difficult for the teachers to perform well in the training while they did not read and understand what they were required to read while the examinations were set according to what was in their modules. Since availability of the modules lead to smooth learning and early completion of the course then, NTRC should make sure that the modules are available for all teachers on time in order to enable TRCs to run their in-service training programme effectively and efficiently for good results. Along with that the modules need to be assessed and evaluated. If they are continually updated then, difficulties would be identified for effective teachers' professional development that would facilitate independent learning. In addition, teachers' educational background must be considered prior to the production of the modules for effective teachers' training since it was the main media they depended on. Contrary to this, TRCs will produce incompetent teachers who will not be able to improve pupils' performance at the schools.

In addition to that, English the medium of instruction in the in-service training programme, was found an obstacle to the teachers because they were not competent in it. This means that it would be worthless to train teachers in a language which they did not understand and expect them to qualify and be competent. In this context, there is a need for Zanzibar Educational Policy to change the language of instruction for the teachers to be Kiswahili rather than English which seemed to be difficult for them. The researcher is of the opinion that if Kiswahili would be used in the training and the modules were written in the same language, then teachers would be able to understand the content and relate what they learn at the TRCs with classroom teaching since the medium of instruction at the primary schools is also in Kiswahili. This idea complies with Maganga (2006) who found out that those teachers' materials in Tanzania mainland in his study were written in Kiswahili Language because the medium of instruction used before (English) was the factor that hindered a large number of in-service teachers to perform well.

Tutors did interact with teachers in the training but findings showed that they had problems in communicating with teachers during the face to face sessions because of poor understanding of English Language. This means that without appropriate and understandable language it will be difficult to pass ideas and concepts from the tutors to the teachers for effective training. So there is a need to use Kiswahili in the training rather than to stick to a language that hampers the development of teachers' professional skills.

The fact that in-service training at Zanzibar TRCs did not consider teachers' educational backgrounds it was difficult to justify that all teachers qualified as Grade IIIA. There should be different curricular to train different teachers according to their levels of education that will show teachers' variations in terms of performances and levels of education they already had. Otherwise, the presence of the said to be trained and qualified teachers at the TRCs who were not competent in some of the subjects they were teaching, would continue to contribute to pupils' low performance in the primary schools.

The workshops were found important to primary school teachers because they focused in classroom teaching but few teachers attended. The materials made during workshops were displayed at the centres and not used in the classrooms as expected then, the role of TRCs in providing opportunity to develop teaching and learning strategies that address the real needs of the children at schools would not much be realized. Findings were similar to those of Knamiller et al. (1999) and Koda (2006) who found out that teaching and learning materials were left at the centres for display. In reality, workshops need to be conducted at the schools where teaching and learning materials would be left for the teachers to use. By doing this, all teachers at the schools will have an opportunity to participate in the workshops where they will gain knowledge and skills required for instructional materials rather than waiting for those few teachers from the TRCs whose impact was very little at the schools.

The study found seminars important to primary school teachers because they helped them to solve problems they experienced in teaching, exchange ideas, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences through teacher groups that led to concrete steps. However, shortage of funds prevented all TRC coordinators to invite all subject teachers from all schools to attend seminars at their centres. In this way, some of the teachers' problems

that they were experiencing in teaching were not solved. This is an indicator that teachers who did not get the opportunity to attend seminars would continue facing unsolved problems that would lead to ineffective teaching for a long time at the schools and contribute to pupils' poor performance.

### 8.1 Teachers' creativity in pedagogical skills

Findings from the study indicated that teachers who had completed in-service training at the TRCs were good in planning lessons in comparison to those who had not attended in-service courses. However, most of them had problems in using the English Language accurately when teaching English lessons. This indicates that if learners did not understand the language well, and were not taught well, they will be likely to fail to respond correctly to the questions. That meant that teachers need to be visited frequently and encouraged in order to continue to grow professionally. Otherwise they will teach as their fellow teachers who were trained long time ago and think that they did not need to plan their lessons because they were experienced which is wrong professionally and, hence, it affected the quality of teaching and learning as well as pupils' performance.

Regarding classroom observation, results showed that teachers trained at the TRCs used few methods of teaching learned from the training. Lecture method, and questions and answers were common methods used almost in all lessons except Mathematics and Science where group work and experiments were used which enabled many pupils to participate in the lessons actively. Failure to apply different methods of teaching hindered pupils' active participation in most of the lessons. Nevertheless, the use of group work in Mathematics was not effective in some of the lessons because pupils had low knowledge in the subject. This means that group work as a method of teaching is good but it should be used appropriately to produce good results/outcomes. In order for the pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills in the classrooms teachers need to use different techniques in order for the students to achieve the most at the schools.

In the situation where English and Mathematics teachers were not able to achieve their objectives contributed to pupils' poor performance in the subjects because objectives provided a framework for devising ways to evaluate student learning. Since written tests and performance were the major means of measuring pupils' achievement it was teachers' responsibilities to achieve their objectives because the examinations were set according to the objectives. The fact that TRCs were far from the schools then, it was difficult for teachers to present their lessons effectively in order to raise pupils' interests without teaching and learning materials. This reduced the effectiveness of teaching and led to lower motivation, hence, pupils' low performance at the schools.

## 9. Conclusion

Results from the study also showed that pupils' work at the schools was marked but they lacked comments and feedback that would encourage the pupils to work hard. For instance, in the situation where some of the pupils failed to provide correct answers, teachers should help by commenting or writing correct answers that would function as a feedback. This would help the pupils to read and correct themselves even before the next lesson rather than putting crosses and leaving it without explanation/comment. Moreover, the way some of the teachers marked pupils' work discouraged them (the pupils) to like some of the subjects particularly Mathematics that was found difficult not only for the pupils but also for the teachers. This should be discouraged because good marking attracts learners as well as encouraging them to work hard which would contribute to improvement, hence, good results.

## 10. Implication and Recommendations

On the basis of the research objectives and findings it can be said that TRCs have played their role in providing professional development programmes for teachers but not as it was planned. For instance, the policy behind the establishment of the TRCs is to provide training to primary school teachers but in the case where the in-service training programme was stopped for two years because of shortage of funds meant that the policy did not work as intended. To some extent it hindered the effectiveness and efficiency implementation of the designed programmes at the centres. In this view, there is a need for the Department of Teacher Education to have well-planned, and long term programmes as well as follow up in order to implement successfully the designed programmes for teachers at the TRCs that will play part in pupils' higher performance at the schools. In line with this, TRCs should not be left under the communities alone because they were not able to sustain the planned programmes as it was required.

Moreover, the action of TRCs to provide in-service training for individual teachers from the schools did not show much improvement in pupils' performance in the study. Since the policy insists the training and retraining of teachers with the aim of improving the quality of teaching then, TRCs need to use a more effective approach of training many teachers. One issue that needs attention of the TRCs is the use different models of training that have been developed to promote and support teachers' professional development. A considerable body of evidence indicates that different models to teacher professional development can complement to each other, and can be implemented in a variety of forms, enabling Teacher Professional Development programmes to

grow to reach large number of teachers while supporting them in their efforts to improve pupils' learning (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Otherwise, the use of TRCs as a strategy that provided in-service training, workshops, and seminars to few teachers would not much contribute to pupils' higher performance in Zanzibari primary schools. The fact that the educational policy (2006) states: 'English shall continue to be medium of instruction in post-primary except for Islamic studies where Kiswahili shall be used' (p.18), then two things need to be addressed; first, TRCs need to consider teachers' educational backgrounds prior to the implementation of any programme. Second, policy makers need to rethink about the language of instruction at the TRCs since it was found inappropriate to the majority of teachers for effective and quality training.

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